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Subject: : LADJ: Leahy wants GAO probe of Ashcroft FOIA policies

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CREATOR:Bradford A. Berenson (CN=Bradford A. Berenson/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

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SUBJECT:: LADJ: Leahy wants GAO probe of Ashcroft FOIA policies

TO:Brett M. Kavanaugh (CN=Brett M. Kavanaugh/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO:Alberto R. Gonzales (CN=Alberto R. Gonzales/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])

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TO:Timothy E. Flanigan (CN=Timothy E. Flanigan/OU=WHO/O=EOP@EOP [WHO])

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----- Forwarded by Bradford A. Berenson/WHO/EOP on
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James Meek P6/b(6)

03/04/2002 03:34:17 PM

Record Type: Record

To:

cc:

Subject: LADJ: Leahy wants GAO probe of Ashcroft FOIA policies

Leahy Seeks Probe of Media Access at DOJ

By James Gordon Meek
L.A. Daily Journal Staff Writer

Mar. 4, 2002

WASHINGTON -- Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., on Friday asked the General Accounting Office to investigate whether Attorney General John Ashcroft is ignoring Freedom of Information Act requests by the public and news media.

Leahy asked the accounting office, Congress' investigative arm, to probe the Department of Justice following reports that news media are being denied access to weekly legislative reports sent to Ashcroft, an action that could be justified under an October directive by the attorney general.

"The new policy appears to favor withholding agency records not only when an exemption clearly applies and disclosure would harm a protected interest but also when there is doubt about its application and no foreseeable harm from disclosure," reads the Leahy letter, which was obtained by the L.A. Daily Journal.

The department declined to comment on Leahy's letter. But in a prepared statement about an unrelated matter, the department has said that it does not dispute "the necessity of producing documents which are properly subject to the Freedom of Information Act and not exempt from disclosure under that Act."

Reporter:

P6/b(6)